



Summer 2005

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) thanks you for participating in this dynamic cooperative pollution prevention program over the past few years. As you know, the program's goal is to help your firm save money, time, labor and resources, while helping to protect and enhance the quality of our environment.

We understand that business owners and managers are concerned with reducing operating costs and liability. We also understand that most companies want to do the right thing with respect to regulatory requirements. But staying on top of those requirements and learning about new pollution control strategies and product substitutions can take a substantial amount of time. That is the purpose behind Environmental Partners. We remain committed to helping you address the root causes for on-site pollution through training and resources.

Volunteer Pledge and Re-Certification

Volunteer certification meant taking a Pledge for Vehicle Maintenance and Repair some time ago. This was a great start to a long-term process of changing everyday practices in a way that will help the local environment and, hopefully, save you money, too. Now it's time to take another look at your overall shop and re-certify. DEP will be coming around to help you take this next step. We have a few simple questions to ask about your practices and any changes you've implemented since taking the pledge. Use this opportunity to scrutinize your operations and look for additional ways to effect positive results through small incremental changes. For example, have you accomplished maintaining a dry shop? Have you reduced the use of aerosol cans, or routinely use drip pans under leaking vehicles? All of these little things add up cumulatively and make a difference in your day to day productivity, cleanliness, and worker safety. Revisit your Compliance and Pollution Prevention checklist in the back of your Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Manual.

When we visit you over the next few months, we look forward to hearing about any/all changes you've incorporated into your daily routines. At DEP we are realists. We want to hear how the Environmental Partners Program has affected your bottom line, your employee morale, and your volume of business. Not only is your success important to us, it's good news to your customers – so be sure to tell *them* about all the positive changes going on behind the scenes!

Where The Program's Been: Progress So Far

As of this summer there are 47 full time "partners" on board. Do you wonder what others are doing? So did we. Here's what we found out.

Precision Auto in Germantown – Owner Bud Wildman uses spill free oil recycling, re-usable shop towels, and refillable non-aerosol spray cans. They use a brake vacuum unit to remove, contain, and prevent the workers from breathing harmful brake dust particles. The unit passes the air through a series of filters, including a high efficiency particulate HEPA filter to capture the brake dust, which can contain asbestos and other harmful fibers. They also use a Viper-jet aqueous steam cleaning parts washer system. The facility uses an approved refrigerant handling unit, with all recovered refrigerants being used on site.



Fletchers Service Center in Olney was featured on the Green Man Show which aired on County Cable Channel 6 in 2004. Their thin film solar panels provide 10% of the energy consumed at the Center. For car washes, they recycle water during the wash process, then rinse cars with water that combines both fresh and recycled to keep energy costs low and save water. They estimate each car washed this way requires less than 25 gallons of water, compared to the average homeowner who uses approximately 150 gallons during a home car wash.

Winkler Automotive Service Center – Owner George Winkler is a community leader in the industry. His facility uses an aqueous parts cleaning system and does not have to dispose of spent petroleum-based cleaning solvents. The cleaning unit has a skimmer that deposits oil and grease into a bucket that is emptied into a waste oil tank. Used batteries are stored on wire racks inside the shop and are picked up once a week. For spill cleanup and absorbents, they use shop rags and a laundry service; soiled rags are kept in closed-top fireproof containers. Employee training is provided on a regular basis in all aspects of good housekeeping practices.



Where The Program Is Going

DEP focused its initial efforts on auto repair shops. But now plans are underway to expand outreach to other business sectors such as dry cleaners, auto body shops, and restaurants. The same kinds of helpful hand-on resources will be offered – each tailored specifically to these new sectors. The idea remains the same, to provide small businesses with alternative operational methods and techniques that are simultaneously profitable and greener.

What's So Important About BMPs?

The kinds of Best Management Practices, or BMPs, you use are one way to assess how well your shop is adopting alternative and more effective methods of doing business. BMPs allow both you and DEP to know how much progress you are making. There are several categories of BMPs, including:

1. using product substitution
2. providing the staff with training and education
3. employing new and more careful housekeeping practices
4. practicing re-use and recycling alternatives.

Whether you have trained staff on spill control and contingency plans, or switched to less caustic detergents, or properly store and recycle batteries, you are using BMPs. Any good housekeeping techniques you use can lead to cost savings, improved health benefits, and environmental paybacks. If you'd like to have a consultation with a DEP representative simply call 240.777.7770. If you need additional information on a particular supplier or vendor for an alternative part, simply re-visit your Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Notebook, or contact DEP directly. We appreciate the efforts made to implement new and improved operational practices.

Printed on 100% recycled paper, 50% post-consumer waste, 100% processed chlorine free.

For more information:



Department of Environmental Protection / Montgomery County, Maryland
255 Rockville Pike, Suite 120, Rockville, MD 20850
240.777.7770 fax: 240.777.7765
e-mail: help@askDEP.com


askDEP.com
We've got answers!